

The New England College of

Optometry

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Window to the Brain

A World of Need

Hi, Tee:

The 'Can Do' Man

Inauguration
Celebration

spring

ALUMNI PERSPECTIVE

2008

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On the cover: A young Monk
in Thailand receives an
ophthalmoscopy exam from
Michael Siebert, OD '99.

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The New England College of

Optometry

ALUMNI MAGAZINE



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Clement Trempe, MD, a professor of optometry and head scientist with the newly-established Center for Healthy Aging at the New England Eye Institute, talks about his research that views the eye as a rich source of biomarkers. Optometrists, he believes, are in a position to detect the early signs of Alzheimer's Disease in their patients.

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Michael Siebert, OD '99, is one of a number of alumni who work with international foundations in traveling the globe to provide eye care for those in need, particularly those in developing nations. Follow Dr. Siebert in Sofia, Bulgaria and learn how the College is leading the way in educating optometrists from some 14 countries.

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If there is an indispensable person at the College, it could very well be Tecleah Neguse, the quiet and unflappable man who survived a harrowing escape through the Sudan from his native Eritrea to come to the U.S. "Hi, Tec" is as common as "good morning" at the College, where Neguse rules as the manager of building operations and maintenance.

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spring
2008



www.neco.edu

letter from the president



Dear Alumni and friends,

In my visits with alumni across the country during the last year, it became abundantly clear that while there is enormous pride in our College, many of you feel that the only time you hear from us is when you receive this magazine or a letter asking for money. No longer will that be the case.

While your continued financial support remains critical to our success, I firmly believe that the relationship between our College and the alumni must be a two-way street. We have a shared responsibility in strengthening our College and the optometric profession.

One of the first steps we have taken to change the equation is perceived by many in the higher education community as a bit radical. Responsibility for alumni affairs has been moved out of the Development Office and placed under a new umbrella encompassing alumni, student affairs, and admissions.

This is a major philosophical shift that reflects my personal belief that as a professional college it is our responsibility and a high priority to serve you in a coordinated and supportive fashion for 40 to 50 years – from the time you walk into our classrooms as a First Year through those wonderful post-retirement years.

The team now responsible for developing and implementing improved services includes the Alumni Association, under the strong and creative leadership of President Phil

Sutherland, OD '86 and his Board; Doreen Kleinman, our new director of student and alumni services, and Terrance Neylon, vice president and dean of students, administration and alumni.

Thanks to their efforts, we have opened a Career Management Office that is serving both alumni and students by full and part-time job opportunities as well as practices for sale on-line. In the future, we expect to make it easy for you to find a classmate or a NECO practitioner in another city or state on-line so you can provide a referral for a patient who may be moving.

We are also looking closely at expanding our continuing education offerings for practitioners and offering retirement planning workshops for those who are nearing the end of their careers.

In addition, a number of initiatives designed to connect our current and prospective students with alumni are underway, including a new summer hometown mentor program enabling students to shadow alumni practitioners, and a career night offering invaluable job advice.

The welcome mat is clearly out for alumni. I hope you will participate in our expanded programs and continue your generous support of our College.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Chen
President

Presidential Inauguration



President Elizabeth Chen, Vice President Terrance Neylon, U.S. Rep. Michael Capuano, and New England Eye Institute President Barry Barresi, OD '77

Elizabeth Chen was officially sworn in as the 11th President of The New England College of Optometry at an inauguration ceremony before more than 300 educators, alumni, health professionals and business leaders shortly after the new school year began.

In her inauguration remarks,

President Chen

called for expanding the College's international initiatives and eye care services for underserved populations, collaborating with the ophthalmic industry and nonprofit organizations, and providing increased financial support for students.



President Chen

EXCERPTED FROM ELIZABETH CHEN'S INAUGURATION SPEECH

"We must look at areas where fulfilling unmet needs is not only the right thing to do, but also provides our faculty and students with new opportunities in research and public service, and offers new sources of funding that will provide a stronger financial base. That is the foundation upon which we can strengthen our core programs and from which we can move thoughtfully into new areas..."

We cannot build a great College on tuition payments alone, as the cost of an optometric education already creates too heavy of a debt burden on our students — a debt burden which narrows their range of career options upon graduation. We must provide more financial support in the way of



Former President Sylvio Dupuis, OD, Douglas Hoffman, OD '80, and Michael Heilberger, OD, SUNY State College of Optometry

scholarships for these students, both to attract the most highly qualified candidates and to ease the immense financial burden that many face...

Providing eye care in developing nations is a critical issue that has already drawn the attention of scholars and major foundations. I look forward to establishing sustainable programs in regions such as India, the near East, other parts of Asia and Africa, as well as expanding programs with our existing overseas partners...

Closer to home, there is immense need and opportunity in the area of geriatric eye care and we expect to be a leading voice in this field. In Massachusetts alone, there are more

than 73,000 elders with serious sight loss. This is both a serious quality of life issue, as well as a safety concern as those with poor vision are more susceptible to accidents and injuries...

The finest care for future generations of patients depends on our ability to attract the best, brightest and most compassionate students to our campus, and provide them with vigorous classroom and clinical training that prepares them for successful careers.

Our entering first year class is one of the brightest and most diverse in our College's history and I pledge to them a firm commitment to academic excellence and the development of a new paradigm in optometric education..."



Meng Lee '08, past president of student council

A leading advocate for community health care and education,

U.S. Rep. Michael E. Capuano,

was the inauguration's guest speaker.

EXCERPTED FROM MICHAEL E. CAPUANO'S SPEECH GIVEN AT ELIZABETH CHEN'S INAUGURATION

"I'm not here just to congratulate and praise a new President. I'm here to thank a school. And I'm not here to thank a school for simply educating young people, that's the job they do. But any school that only educates is failing. I don't care how brilliant the students are, I don't care what successes they have. If that's all they do, teach them how to think, teach them how to take tests and be successful by some measures in life, that's not enough. This school understands that...

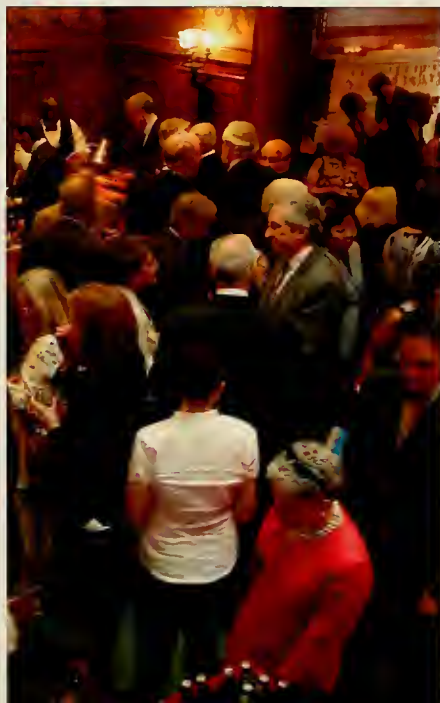
But just as important, in my opinion, is teaching young people the commitments that they should have beyond their professional life, whatever career they choose. To understand that we are really all in this together, and that if you don't go beyond yourself to help your fellow man in some way, then all you're doing is just pass-



Trustee Brian Klinger, OD, Board of Trustee Chairman Steven Manfredi, President Chen

ing through. And you may gather automobiles and houses and stock portfolios, but you won't change the world. This school understands that. This school is committed to providing eye care for those of us who can't afford it...

And it's not just a passing commitment, (it is) something you've been doing for years, something that's an integral part of what's taught and what is lived. You do it in our community health centers, in our public schools and, more telling than anything else, in our homeless shelters, to go out and provide an essential medical need to our brothers and sisters who cannot afford it. This school understands that the least amongst us is important and deserves our help, our support and our caring..."





Eyes: Window to the Brain

BY EILEEN MCCLUSKEY

If Clement Trempe, MD, has his way, optometrists will play a critical role in detecting Alzheimer's Disease and other neurodegenerative afflictions before they have a chance to wreak havoc. Indeed, these clinicians would become the nerve center of reliable and affordable tests that would be as routine as colonoscopies, mammograms, and cholesterol blood tests.

“The eye is the canary of the mind,” says Trempe, a distinguished clinician, educator, and researcher, who recently joined NECO and the New England Eye Institute as professor of optometry and head scientist with the newly-established Center for Healthy Aging at NEEI.

“Everybody says the eye is the window to the brain, but that wisdom is not being practiced. That’s why I’m here, so I can teach 400 optometry students how to recognize the early ocular signs of neurodegenerative and other systemic diseases.

Optimetrists see over 50 million American patients every year. They are the only ones in a position to detect the early signs of AD in the general population.

Trempe, who moved his private practice to New England Eye Commonwealth, NEEI’s flagship facility last summer, wants to blaze a trail leading to research funding that would prove his theory about the eye as a rich source of biomarkers.

“Stem cells are present in every tissue of the eye,” says Trempe, who since the 1970s has specialized in advanced diseases of the retina.



Clement Trempe, MD

“For example, they can be found in the lens, the cornea, the retina, the optic nerve, and on capillaries in the brain.

“Cortical cataracts are the Rosetta Stone of Alzheimer’s Disease,” Trempe continues. The lens, he explains, retains a stem cell population that proliferates and differentiates throughout life. “The lens functions essentially as a single gigantic stem cell and a time capsule. It does not destroy old cells by apoptosis but uses young stem cells to continually nurture older cells. So the lens provides a record of the life history of the individual from embryo to old age.”

In his decades of clinical practice, Trempe has focused on retinal diseases such as macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, and retinal vein occlusion. He has also trained over 100 retinal and other fellows at the Schepens Eye Research Institute and Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, who are now practicing in nearly every country in the world.

Trempe’s clinical trials have been funded continuously for over 25 years by the National Eye Institute. These clinical trials have addressed the role of laser photocoagulation in diseases of

the eye. He was also a principal investigator in the National Eye Institute-funded Collaborative Ocular Melanoma Study.

In one of his hallmark clinical contributions, Trempe – who plans to maintain his long-standing clinical, teaching, and research appointments at Harvard Medical School, the Eye Research Institute of the Retina Foundation, Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, Massachusetts General Hospital, and Beth Israel Hospital – demonstrated the effectiveness of treating patients medically for diabetic retinopathy instead of performing laser photocoagulation treatment and vitrectomy.



Dorothy Hitchmoth, OD '96 and Dr. Trempe

Trempe's ideas about early detection of Alzheimer's also center on non-invasive techniques. Gazing into the eye using equipment they already have in their offices, optometrists can spot the telltale signs of neurodegenerative diseases.

"The molecular pathological findings associated with Alzheimer's Disease overlap in the lens and the brain," explains Trempe.

"Alzheimer's characteristic dementia is preceded by a long asymptomatic period that may last for decades. During this time, amyloid plaques and neurofibrillary tangles gradually accumulate in the brain. Eventually, these lesions cause so

much brain damage that cognitive impairment can be observed. Many studies have demonstrated decreased density of synapses in a variety of regions in the AD brain."

Early ocular biomarkers for Alzheimer's and other neurodegenerative diseases, as well as a variety of chronic infections that affect the brain, include changes in the supranuclear portion of the lens. Abnormal lens proteins, another red flag, can be measured "using the quasi-elastic light scattering analysis of the lens," Trempe notes. "Various types of cataracts produce very different types of early aberrations, and this is especially true for the cortical type of cataract. This is where the abnormal misfolded protein accumulates in the lenses of AD patients.

"Most eye care professionals are not aware of these early biomarkers," Trempe continues. "I am often told that we should not tell the patients and the public because it will make them nervous, but we do not have the same philosophy about breast cancer or high cholesterol."

Nor would it be time to panic if an optometrist saw signs of disease. Since neurodegenerative and other disease processes would not have progressed to a debilitating stage when the optometrist first spots it, says Trempe, "it is a wake-up call for patients to review their habits and see if there are any modifiable factors that might be increasing their risk of Alzheimer's Disease and mortality."

For such individuals, Trempe would advise them to heed common sense advice about regular exercise and eating fresh fruits and vegetables. "There is evidence that fish oil and a number of vitamins, drugs, and lifestyle factors can help to reduce the risk for developing AD," he notes.





Dr. Hitchmoth and Dr. Trempe

Trempe sees a golden opportunity to mine research dollars that would help to prove his points and move his vision to reality. The National Institutes of Health recently announced it will distribute \$60 million in research grants for studies on early biomarkers of Alzheimer's Disease.

"The eye is not included in the NIH grant-making parameters," says Trempe who, not surprisingly, sees red when he thinks of this missed chance to profoundly influence medical outcomes. He would issue a rallying cry, urging optometrists to insist, through the American Optometric Association, that the NIH allocate some of that \$60 million to eye research.



"Today, in the US alone, we have 30,000 optometrists who could help with a massive study using equipment that every optometrist already has in their offices," he says. "Everyone is talking about biomarkers, but not about finding them through simple optometric exams. It's astounding, really. What are we waiting for?"



A World of Need

BY SHERRY BAKER

Optometry Offers Help and Hope

Last October, Michael Siebert, OD '99 braved a windy, rainy day to hand-deliver and fit an elderly woman's glasses. While a house call would be unusual for any optometrist, it was even more so in this instance – because it involved a flight to Sofia, Bulgaria.

Siebert first met the woman, Margarita, the week before when he was in Bulgaria as a volunteer for Give the Gift of Sight Foundation, one of the charitable programs providing free vision care and eyewear to underprivileged individuals in developing countries.

"She came to my station with a pair of glasses on the verge of breaking. There was only one lens, a -17.00, and that wasn't strong enough to meet her needs," Siebert recalls. "I didn't have the heart to tell her we had nothing close to her prescription and there was no way I could help her. I spoke with the team leader about the situation and he volunteered to make her a pair of glasses with the appropriate prescription when we returned to the U.S."

Back home in Miami, where he has a practice in South Beach, Siebert was haunted by the image of Margarita waiting for glasses that would open up the world to her. He carried her glasses in his car for weeks, hesitating to send them because he was worried they might not reach her intact if he mailed them. "I shared my concerns with a friend who works with US Airways and he arranged for me to fly back to deliver and fit the glasses in person. It was an experience I will never forget," he says.

Siebert knocked on her door but Margarita was embarrassed to let him inside her tiny apartment, so he fitted her glasses standing outside in the rain. "It didn't matter – it was a deeply moving experience to have these specially made glasses for her and to know that her sight would be so improved it would change her entire approach toward her daily life," he recalls.

Siebert is one of a number of optometrists who are concerned about providing eye care for those in developing nations. Lighthouse International, a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving vision, estimates that 180 million people worldwide have visual impairments.



Michael Siebert, OD '99 delivering glasses to Margarita in Sofia, Bulgaria

Since 1991, Give the Gift of Sight has sponsored 135 missions to 30 different countries, providing care to more than one million individuals. In addition, the organization trains local volunteers to use an autorefractor and leaves several thousand pairs of glasses behind in countries that they have an established relationship with to further help those in the community.

The challenge of providing eye care services for those in need is a serious one, says Erik Weissberg, OD '97, associate professor of optometry, who has worked on initiatives to provide optometric care in other countries (see sidebar).

"We are living in a time of heightened awareness when it comes to the lack of eye care in much of the world, particularly the high prevalence of uncorrected refractive error," he says.

Weissberg points out that there are a number of different options to provide eye care for those in developing nations, but believes that initiatives like those in which Siebert and others are involved are also having a significant impact on eye care internationally.

Although Siebert says NECO provided him with an excellent background for this kind of work, especially in recognizing eye diseases, it is sometimes the most simple of remedies that are literally life-changing for some third world people with vision problems.

"For example, in Thailand, people who work outside all the time often develop pterygium, a potentially sight-obstructing growth on the front of the eye. We distribute sunglasses to protect them from this problem and they are able to work much more efficiently," he says. Another example

was a man who needed - 12.00D glasses but who had never had any at all. "When we fitted him with the proper prescription, he began crying. He had never really seen his family before. It is extremely rewarding to do this kind of volunteer work and to see the tangible results. People able to do work they couldn't do before, count money, and do other things you need good vision for."



Monks waiting to get glasses at dispensary

"There is a real satisfaction in providing eye care for those who would never receive it otherwise," Siebert says. "I can't think of anything more rewarding."

How do these international missions work? Siebert explains that a group of approximately eight optometrists work in stations so they can efficiently see as many as 20,000 to 35,000 local people. "One station registers people, another checks visual acuity, while still another checks the front and back of the eye for problems," he points out. "We distribute glasses and set up referrals, if needed, to local doctors through the local Lion's Club."

2007

Report of Gifts

The New England College of Optometry

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

The contributions recorded in this report were received between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2007.

We gratefully acknowledge the generosity of all donors and apologize for any omission in the compilation of the gift listings. Gift club membership is based on the total of outright gifts and combined matches, if any.

The mission of The New England College of Optometry is to serve the optometric needs of the public by educating optometrists to the highest level of proficiency, integrity, and professionalism.

THE PHILANTHROPIST SOCIETY

(Cumulative Total of \$50,000 or More)

The Philanthropist Society recognizes a group of extraordinarily generous donors. These distinguished individuals have demonstrated their exceptional commitment to the College and the future of the optometric profession. We are pleased to express our gratitude for their philanthropic leadership.

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VERAS

In addition to initiatives such as those of the Give the Gift of Sight Foundation, Eric Weissberg '97, an associate professor of optometry at NECO, believes that optometrists should support collaborative efforts designed to "build sustainable programs that empower communities to provide eye care for themselves."

One example: VERAS, a project in which faculty from NECO, two other optometry schools and UNESCO, are working to train local school teachers and nurses in Central America to screen children for vision problems, using culturally sensitive visual acuity tests.

The goal of VERAS is to raise awareness of the need for eye care, and identify those children who may need additional follow-up by local doctors trained by the international experts in the field.

"This is an example of a program that focuses on transferring knowledge to empower the community so that people can begin to care for themselves," Weissberg says.

"International groups are most effective when they function as a bridge towards the more sustainable programs, not as the solution themselves. These programs should evolve and create an opportunity to provide hands-on side by side training for local doctors and community workers as a way of transferring knowledge."



WORLD LEADER IN INTERNATIONAL EYE CARE

Over the past 40 years, the College has emerged as the leader in International Optometric Education. The Center for the International Advancement of Optometry, which coordinates programs in China, Germany, Spain, Israel, Central and South America, and South Africa, was created to:

- > Help other nations develop models of eye care delivery appropriate to local conditions;

- > Enhance the skills and knowledge of Optometrists and Optometric educators currently working and teaching in other countries;

- > Promote a concern for ethical training and care.

During the past 12 years in South Africa alone, the College has played a major role in improving the quality of optometric care in that country by training more than 600 health care professionals.

In the past year, the College's faculty:

- > Conducted continuing education lectures in Tel Aviv, Bogota, and Madrid.

- > Lectured and conducted workshops for Masters of Optometry programs for students in Aalen, Germany; Bangkok, Thailand; Wenzhou, China; Bogota, Colombia; and Jerusalem, Israel.

- > Led workshops for Bachelor of Optometry programs at the Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca in Milan.

- > Offered a continuing education program at NECO for optometrists from throughout Spain in collaboration with Centro Boston de Optometría, Madrid,

- > Provided eye care services for children and families in El Salvador, along with OD III students, during a two-week visit.

Hi, Tec

The 'Can Do' Man



BY ELIZABETH MEHREN

About 100 times a day, the same friendly greeting floats in the direction of the front office at Namias Hall. "Hi, Tec" is not an endorsement of the College's advanced electronics system, but rather, an acknowledgement of one of the school's most valued employees – and a professional who harbors a courageous personal saga born of determination, integrity and political upheaval.

Officially, as manager of building operations and maintenance, 47-year-old Tecleab Neguse oversees NECO's infrastructure. But more accurately, in the view of those who work with the tall, spare man with the bushy, coal-black beard and the broad, reassuring smile, he holds the whole place together.

“He is more than the glue,” says Barbara McGinley, director of student services. “He is just so there for us. He has a presence, and he makes people feel good. He is indispensable. I really don't know how this place would operate without him.”

Tec, as he is known universally around campus, routinely puts in 14-hour days, Monday through Sunday, as he supervises security, house-keeping, maintenance and groundskeepers. From his perch overlooking Beacon Street, Tec is also the school's front desk manager. For a time, soon after he joined the staff in 1988, Tec even lived in a tiny room on the school's third floor.

His jobs range from huge to minuscule – but all, to Tec, equally important. He is the guy people call when the plumbing backs up or the wiring goes kazooey. He makes sure the chandeliers are polished, and that every light bulb twinkles. At the first sign of ice, he is outside, salting the steps and sidewalk. On harsh winter days, he has been known to help dig out cars for faculty and students alike.

Any request for help is met with the same preternaturally calm response, according to McGinley and others at NECO.

“His answer is always ‘no problem,’ ” she says. “And then he smiles, and says, ‘how're you doing?’”

His serene unflappability is hard-earned. To get to NECO, Tec fled his native Africa with little more than his wits and the clothes he was wearing. Hunger was the least of the obstacles he confronted as he worked his way toward a new life in a country he knew little about. There were political enemies who wanted to kill him – and in the jungle, on a lonely and terrifying trek toward freedom, wild animals that probably would liked to have eaten him.

These days, canvassing the corridors at NECO, Tec wears a walkie-talkie that seems never to stop crackling with crises that only he can be expected to solve. As he carries on a conversation with a visitor to whom he has already provided quarters for the parking meter on Beacon Street, his eyes scan the floors, the ceiling, the woodwork – just to make sure all is in perfect order.

“This job is really my home – my home and my family,” he says. “I enjoy every hour of my work. I love all the people surrounding me. They understand me. They respect me. I love this place.”



He refers to his colleagues as family. For his boss, Vice President Terrance B. Neylon, EdD, dean of students, administration and alumni, he reserves special affection.

"He is really my brother, and my best friend," Tec says.

Neylon swiftly returns the compliment. "I feel the same way," he says, unhesitatingly. "Tec is the most dignified and ethical man I have ever met in my life. He is a quiet man, and he will do anything for anybody. Because of that, he is almost a fixture that nobody notices."

Few who work with him know that the odyssey that brought Tec to The New England College of Optometry began with the civil war in his home country of Eritrea. In a 30-year struggle for independence from Ethiopia, Tec sided with rebels seeking freedom for their country. It was the early 1980s. Tec, a management student at Asmara University in Eritrea's capital city, began providing reports for the rebels on Ethiopian troop activity.

Once his spying became known, Tec faced certain death if he remained in Eritrea. Late one night, he left a note for his six brothers and sisters.

*"Don't worry," he wrote.
"Hopefully everything will be
okay. I am leaving for good."*

His journey through the jungle into Sudan lasted 14 days. He traveled alone, by foot and only at night, in order to attract less attention. Arriving in Khartoum, he contacted a United Nations commission to apply for political asylum. An uncle he had never met who lived in New Jersey agreed to sponsor him. In 1984, Tec finally set foot on U.S. soil.

A chance visit with his uncle brought him to Boston. Though he had never seen snow – never mind changing fall leaves or even a strange sport called baseball – Tec knew he had found his new home.

"I had no money, no insurance, no job," he remembers. But he did have a new friend who mentioned that someplace called The New England College of Optometry was looking for a maintenance person.

For eight years, Tec lived on the third floor of the grand old Beacon Street mansion that at the time, he says, was "95% in disrepair." In the mid-1990s, his longtime girlfriend from Eritrea – a fellow rebel – also made her way to Boston. He and Alma, a secretary, were married in 1996. Their daughter Mary is seven years old. Tec became a U.S. citizen 12 years ago. More recently, he became a homeowner in nearby Medford.

"When I say, 'God Bless America,' I really mean it," he says. "I am very lucky."

At NECO, the feeling is quite mutual.

"Tec's just a completely amazing guy," marvels student body president Matthew Bauer. "He seems to always have about a million things on his plate at once, and they all seem to get done in a snap."

For instance, Bauer recalls the mad rush to complete the Hy Kamens Student Center in time for the start of the 2007 school year.

"It was absolutely chaotic," Bauer says. "Not only that, but we had the NECO Olympics going on, with all the classes competing against each other. Tec was dealing with all that, and with all the students coming back with all their different demands. Every time we needed something from Tec, it was, 'No problem, my friend.' And then it just got done."



Tecleab Neguse

Just once, Bauer says, he caught Tec looking wide-eyed when he asked him to fix one thing too many. "And then he says, 'okay, no problem,' and of course it gets done."

Academic Dean Steve Koevary, PhD, describes Tec as indispensable. "He's the guy who opens the building in the morning and shuts it down at night. He's on call all the time."

Tec says there is never one day when he does not feel fortunate. Neylon, for one, says all of NECO should share that sentiment. "How lucky the school is to have him," he says. "He is a resource that allows us to function as we do."

Even more so, one on one, Neylon says he recognizes the extraordinary nature of the friendship he and Tec have forged. "A man like him, he will be part of my life until the day I die," Neylon says. "I don't care what happens, he'll be there. He's that close to me as a human being."

NEW STAFF

Nancy Broude, a senior development professional for more than 15 years, has been named Vice President of Philanthropy and Sponsored Programs. She will oversee all of the College's fundraising efforts, focusing primarily in the areas of foundation and corporate gifts.

Previously, Broude served as director of development at the Jewish Rehabilitation Center Charitable Foundation, and director of major gifts for the Boston YWCA.

Prior to her development career, she worked for 11 years at the Harvard Graduate School of Education as an international consultant and coordinator of programs at The Principals' Center.

She holds an EdM from Harvard's Graduate School of Education and a BA from Boston College.

Doreen Kleinman, PhD, has been named Director of Alumni and Student Services. She is responsible for working closely with the Alumni Association in developing and providing services for more than 3,500 NECO graduates.

Previously, she was director of the Office of Alumni Affairs at Georgian Court University in Lakewood, NJ where she sharply increased programs and services for the school's alumni association.

Kleinman holds a PhD in Educational Administration and Policy Studies from the University of Albany, SUNY. She also holds MS and BA degrees from the University.

alumni perspective

Alumni from a dozen Southwestern states and the Classes of '82 and '77 are taking the lead in three different fundraising initiatives to support the College and the New England Eye Institute.

Paul C. Ajanian, OD '80 and David Ferris, OD '66 are co-chairing one of the largest alumni development efforts in the College's history – a campaign to establish an Ophthalmic Technology Suite for the New England Eye Institute, the College's clinical system.

Don Higgins, OD '82 is leading a \$120,000 campaign to fund a full scholarship on behalf of his graduating class. No other NECO Class has ever sought to fund a full scholarship.

The Class of '77 demonstrated what one class could do, as 43 members of the 63-student class generously contributed \$57,846 gift to renovate and rename PreClinic I at 424 Beacon St. The "Class of 1977 PreClinic" was dedicated during their 30th reunion. Some 30 members of the Class attended the event.

In presenting the gift to the College, David J. Caban, OD '77, whose daughter, Christine, is an OD III at NECO, told fellow alumni that "we must never forget that the careers we are enjoying now had their birth in a pre-clinic in this very building."

He challenged other classes to "give back in a big way to make our alma mater an even better place for the education of future ODs. I'd love to come back here for our 40th and see 10 other rooms with plaques from the large classes that followed us," Caban said.

Paulette Demers-Turco, OD '77, the past president of the Alumni Association, served as chair of the fundraising effort. Five members of the Class gave gifts of \$5,000 or more, she said.

Ajanian, who practices in Atlanta, and Ferris, who is retired and lives in Florida, are encouraging alumni to name a Southeastern Alumni Ophthalmic Technology Suite that will include diagnostic technology such as Retinal Tomography, a Four Domain High Speed OCT and "other new and evolving instrumentation for the detection and management of various ocular disease entities."

"We want to ensure that students will be even better prepared that we were as they lead our profession into the future," the two men said in kicking off the four-year campaign.

The Class of '82 scholarship campaign was announced in a letter written by Higgins to the 88 members of his class. "I am extremely proud to be an alumnus and appreciative of the many who contributed funds to enhance the education and training of current and future students at NECO."



Diane Wilson, OD III, and her parents, Diane Caban and David Caban, OD '77



E. Robert Grossman, OD '64, his wife, Adrienne, and President Chen

In urging his classmates to join him in raising \$120,000 for the scholarship, Higgins pointed out that it has become increasingly competitive to attract top students as other optometry colleges offer more financial aid.

"The Class of '82 Scholarship will be based on merit and will enable us to attract the best and brightest to our School," he said.

CIBA Vision, Essilor Award \$27K in Grants to Nine Alumni

Nine alumni and a faculty member were selected to attend the Management and Business Academy, an educational program sponsored by CIBA Vision and Essilor of America.

The participants, all of whom are optometric practice owners, were awarded a total of \$27,000 in education grants from the two companies for all tuition and travel expenses to attend the one-and-a-half day programs held in Atlanta and Orlando.

The program focused on improving office processes and financial performance, including increasing retention and referrals and internal marketing opportunities.

Essilor is the leading manufacturer and wholesale distributor of optical lenses in the United States, while CIBA Vision is a global leader in the research, development and manufacturing of contact lenses and lens care products.

Participants include:
Deborah Bettencourt, OD '85
Michael Cohn, OD '77
Ron Ferrucci, OD, '74
Matt Forgues, OD '97
Cheryl Landry, OD '85
Susan Lucash, OD '79
John Mooney, OD '85
Ron Watanabe, OD, associate professor of optometry.

Barresi named Executive Director of the American Optometric Association

Barry J. Barresi, OD '77, PhD, the president of the New England Eye Institute (NEEI) and vice president of clinical affairs for the College, has been named executive director of the American Optometric Association (AOA), effective July 1.

Barresi, the first NECO alumnus ever named to the top post, has had a distinguished 30-year optometric career as a practitioner, clinical teacher, lecturer, academic administrator, business and health care executive. He has headed NEEI for the past seven years.

“Although Dr. Barresi’s departure is a significant loss for the College, I am proud that we will be ‘graduating’ one of our own into such a major national leadership role,” said President Elizabeth Chen.

Barresi is currently a member of the AOA’s Federal Relations Committee, and has been involved with the committee’s work for more than a decade. He also serves as a consultant to AOA’s Healthy Eyes Healthy People® project and is the founding chair of the newly established National Commission on Vision and Health.

He has been a key player in AOA’s advocacy efforts, having testified across the country in state legislatures

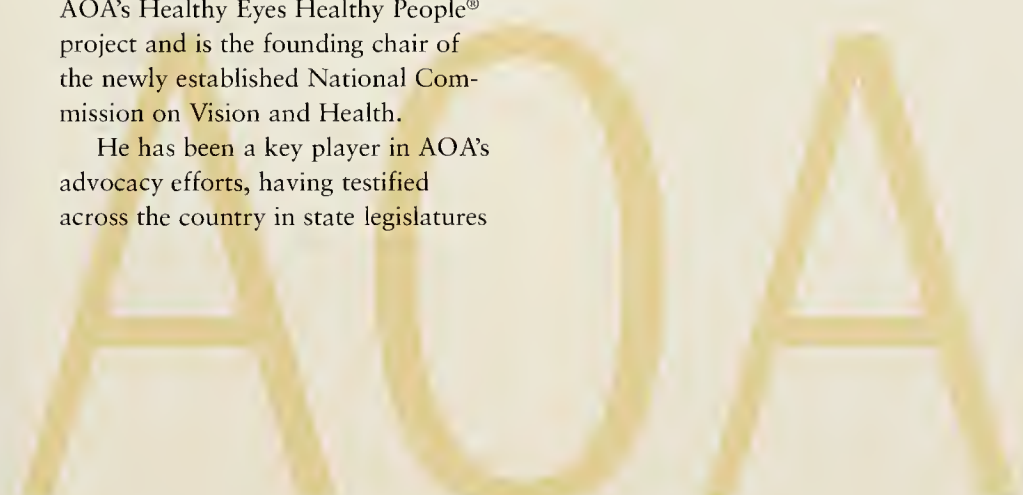


Barry Barresi, OD, '77

on scope-of-practice legislation and worked with AOA on policy development and advocacy in Washington.

Prior to joining NECO, Barresi was vice president and dean of academic affairs at the State University of New York, State College of Optometry, and founding director of the school’s Center for Vision Care Policy. At Southern California College of Optometry, he was director of outreach programs.

His late father, Joseph V. Barresi, OD '49, was a 50-year member of the AOA and private practitioner in Maine.



alumni classnotes

Births

Paulette Demers-Turco, OD '77, a granddaughter Bianca Isabella, Nov. 1, 2007

Jason Kaminski, OD '96, Kenna Collins, April 18, 2007

Kristen Griebel, OD '97, Mia Grace, Oct. 6, 2007

Aileen Maria-Cruz, OD '02, Noah Alexander, June 14, 2007

Yaakov Zacks, OD '06, Aaron, Dec. 6, 2006

Deaths

Elvin B. Haynes, OD '33

Joseph J. Donovan, OD '39

Harold Cline, OD '42

Ira Schwartz, OD '53

Melvin A. Golden, OD '56

John C. Janes, OD '56

William L. Roberts, OD '63

Dominick A. Pecora, OD '74

Adelbert O. Parrott, OD – trustee emeritus

Let your classmates and other alumni know about your latest news by submitting a Classnotes item for our next issue. A new job, spouse or child? A professional award or honor? Published a book or paper? Send your news to Doreen Kleinman, PhD, Director of Alumni and Student Relations: alumni@neco.edu.

1940's

Norman Ruby, OD '49 and wife, Libby, have two sons and four grandchildren. Norman enjoyed being in practice for 57 years and is now enjoying retirement.

1950's

Burton Gerson, OD '50 and wife Nora are living in Southeast Florida, have two sons and five grandchildren. Burton maintains his MA license but isn't actively practicing.

Herbert E. O'Dell, OD '50 has been retired for 14 years and currently resides in Newcastle, ME.

Alfred M. Rappaport, OD '50 has three grandchildren and he is still in private practice in Garden City, NY where he works three days a week specializing in vision training and pediatric optometry.

William M. Myers, OD '52 enjoys the freedom of his semi-retirement and maintains a small office in his home in Framingham, MA. He heads south for part of the year and makes stops along the way to visit with his children in New Jersey, Rhode Island and Georgia. He has seven grandchildren.

Bernard Stecher, OD '52 is living on Cape Cod. He is enjoying his semi-retirement which allows him time to spend with his children and grandchildren as well as travel, do tai chi, and vacation in Florida.

1960's

Earl H. Lizotte, OD '60 has a home office in Easthampton, MA and a therapy office at the Northeast Adolescent Research Institute in Holyoke, MA, where he works with dysfunctional youngsters. He raises red worms to manufacture organic fertilizer and has introduced starter red worm farms at area elementary schools which assists the teachers in introducing the practice of recycling.

Joel Altman, OD '64 works part time as an optometrist and lives in Foxboro, MA. He has three children and also works on contracting with performing arts organizations on behalf of his pianist clients (www.altmanartists.com).

Larry Kline, OD '67, Woodbridge, CT has four children and two grandchildren. He has an active four doctor practice in Prospect, CT and formerly held a teaching position at the Yale University Department of Ophthalmology. He is the Director of Professions/Services for Sauflon Pharmaceuticals and a Diplomate AAO Contact Lenses and Low Vision. His hobbies are tai chi, yoga, and singing.

Charles Mullen, OD '69, Chair of the Board of Directors of the New England Eye Institute and Chair of NECO's Board of Trustees Institutional Advancement & Development Committee, received a Resolution of Commendation from the Pennsylvania College of Optometry. Charles has served as a member of the Pennsylvania College of Optometry's Board of Trustees since 2003.

1970's

Anthony Cavallerano, OD '72 was interviewed for an article on new developments at Bausch & Lomb in the August 21, 2007 issue of the *Life Science Weekly*.

Joseph Osmanski, OD '74 is still working in two offices and the Providence VAMC where he is an adjunct faculty member for NECO and other optometry colleges. He also was an adjunct faculty member in Indiana while deployed to Fort Knox for operation Enduring Freedom. His son Jad is a fourth year at NECO. Joseph was unable to attend his 30th reunion because the Army called him into service.

Alumni Reunion reception





Arthur Goldman, OD, '77. Glenda Denham, OD '77. Dee Kahan, OD, '77 and Barbara Manburg, OD, '77

Marc C. Epstein, OD '75 Past President of the Nassau County Optometric Society; Chief of Optometry at the Catholic Medical Center of Brooklyn and Queens, NY; Director of Low Vision Services at North Shore University Hospital; and Low Vision Consultant to the Helen Keller National Center for the Deaf and Blind, and past president of the New York Academy of Optometry. He has three sons.

Edward Godnig, OD '76, Wasilla, Alaska recently published a book called *New Eyes on Old Alaska* (www.northbooks.com). The book talks about his adventures during his first three years of travel through remote bush villages in Alaska rendering vision care to Native Alaskans.

Robert Maiolo, OD '76 has returned to private practice in Stamford, CT after several years as the Clinical Director of TLC LASIK Center and currently serves on the Board of Directors of Optical Distribution Group. He has twin sons.

Glenda Denham, OD '77 was the first female optometrist in Boulder, CO and has expanded from primary practice to a satellite office at the Twelve Eyed Toad Optical. Glenda is the Secretary and Treasurer of the Colorado Volunteer Optometrists in Service to Humanity and has provided services in Mexico, Honduras, Costa Rica, Thailand, the Dominican Republic, and Belize.

Fred Goldberg, OD '77 is the president-elect of the Virginia Optometric Assn. and president of the McLean Lions Club.

James Boccuzzi, OD '79 was named Connecticut Optometrist of the Year by the Connecticut Association of Optometrists. In addition to his private practice, he has been a



Larry Lupo, OD, '77, Donald Wilson, OD, '77, Nancy Carlson, OD, '77 and Peter Guhl, OD, '77

member of the sports medicine staff at the University of Connecticut since 1991. He also spends a few days each year caring for the players of the Kansas City Royals during their spring training.

Celia Hinrichs, OD '79 is currently practicing in Sudbury, MA.

1980's

Leon Fishlyn, OD '80 is currently practicing in Acton, MA.

John Pietrantonio, OD '80 co-authored an article on dry eye for the *Review of Optometry Online*.

James Bourgeois, OD '82, MD professor of clinical psychiatry at the University of California, Davis Medical Center, presented on psychiatric illness and visual ophthalmic manifestations at the University of California Berkeley School of Optometry. He has two sons.

Douglas P. Benoit, OD '83, Concord, NH is a Fellow for the American Academy of Optometry; Diplomate for the Section on Cornea and Contact Lenses; and served as president of the New Hampshire Board of Optometry for two terms. He is a clinical investigator for the FDA, and serves on the Executive Committee of AAO, Section of Cornea and Contact Lenses, and on the Advisory Committee of the Gas Permeable Lens Institute.

Gary A. Galante, OD '84, Glen Cove, NY is a member of the New York State Optometric Association and the American Optometric Association. He has two children.

Brian Lewy, OD '84, New York City, is the owner of two internet companies, and is a senior examiner for the National Board of Examiners in Optometry. He has two children.

NECO's China Connection

News out of China....Frank Thorn, PhD, OD, '79, professor of vision science, is the recipient of the fifth annual Yandang Special Friendship Award from the city of Wenzhou, China, and Lu Fan, OD, '02, has been re-elected to the Chinese National People's Congress.

Thorn and his colleague, James Comerford, PhD, OD, '78, professor of vision science, were the first two optometry faculty to teach courses in China at the Wenzhou Medical College (WMC). NECO signed a "twin colleges" agreement with the school in 1992.

Thorn, a popular and well-known figure in Wenzhou, has returned to the city 10 times to work with the students, faculty, and administrators at the WMC to teach courses and to help develop their curriculum and research projects, as well as plan new programs.

Fan, recently appointed vice president at WMC by the Ministry of Education, has worked to upgrade health and education as a member of the Chinese National People's Congress. In her new role at WMC, she will be leading the faculty in upgrading existing programs and planning new programs in one of the fastest growing medical schools in China.

As part of the "twin colleges" agreement, young Chinese ophthalmologists can earn an MS in Vision Science from WMC and a Doctor of Optometry degree from NECO. This is the only American doctor of optometry degree recognized by the Chinese ministry of education. Fan was the first graduate of the program.

William J. O'Donnell, OD '85 is currently practicing in Tyngsboro, MA.

David Sendrowski, OD '85, Fullerton, CA has been promoted to full professor at Southern California College of Optometry where he was selected Teacher of the Year in 2007. David has completed two chapters for the 5th edition of *Clinical Ocular Pharmacology*, one on thyroid, the other on steroids.

Robert Strath, OD '86 is currently practicing in British Columbia.

Philip Sutherland, OD '86 is the current President of the NECO Alumni Association Board of Directors, Vice Chair of the Andover Conservation Commission, and a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity. Phil has three children.

Theresa L. Bacaris, OD '87 achieved her professional goal and opened her own office in Mastic, NY in 2005. She is pleased to report her practice is growing nicely and has two children.

Lynn Brandes, OD '87 is a Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry, enjoys attending optometric conferences and lectures,

The new officers of the Maine Optometric Association Board of Directors could form an alumni club by themselves. The officers include: Paul Cote, OD, '94, president; Reg Mailhot, OD '77, president-elect; Linda Cameron, OD '97, first vice president; Phil Goldthwait, OD '88, second vice president; Anne-Louise Goulet, OD '92, secretary-treasurer; Lee DeRosa, OD '78, immediate past president; and Board members John Walters, OD '97, Timothy Tolford, OD '79, Renee Whelan, OD '84, and Thomas Gordon, OD '89.



Erik Weissberg '97 receives Outstanding Young Alumnus award from Barry Barresi, OD '77

and traveling. Recently she has traveled to Israel, Arizona, and Puerto Rico. She has a son.

Craig Brotsky, OD '87, Charlton, MA has been at the Fallon Clinic for the past 10 years. He recently celebrated his 25th wedding anniversary and has two teenage children.

Ron Mastrolia, OD '87 is currently practicing in Fairhaven, MA.

Laura J. Shipman, OD '87, Newton, NJ recently celebrated her 20th wedding anniversary. She has two children and spend "family time" boating and camping.

David E. Baron, OD '89 currently practices in Fitchburg, MA.

1990's

Brenda DeForrest, OD '90, Orlando, FL works full time, is a soccer and swim mom, and an amateur tri-athlete. She has one daughter.

Wieslawa Andros-Andrzejewska, OD '92, San Antonio, TX opened and developed Eyecenter into a very successful practice. She was the oldest student and first grandmother to ever graduate from NECO and now has four grandchildren. Her daughter is also an optometrist.

Robert W. Aube, Jr., OD '92 opened a second practice in Vernon, CT called Visual Perceptions Vernon. He has four children.

Donovan Green, OD '92 works as the Director of Ancillary Services at The Pentagon where he oversees laboratory, pharmacy, radiology, and optometry operations. In addition, he provides eye care to the Army's top General Officers, VIPs, and Secretary of the Services. He is currently the Secretary/Treasurer for the Armed Forces Optometric Society. He has one son.

Terry Leach, OD '92 is a managing doctor in a group practice in Cincinnati, OH that has 10 locations.

David and Rachael Sweeney, ODs '92 have three children and enjoy seeing their patients at Insight in Atlanta, GA.

Sarbjit Singh Virk, OD '92 has two solo practices in Washington state that provides complete eye care and specializes in Orthokeratology, Dry Eye Syndrome, and Computer Vision Syndrome. He is a Fellow of the Orthokeratology Academy of America. He has two children. He hopes to start a free eye clinic in his community.

Elizabeth Harris-Stone, OD '93 married Patrick Stone, OD '92 and they have twin sons. Elizabeth is self employed at Linsey Eyecare in Wyomissing, PA where she practices primary care optometry with emphasis on contact lens fitting.

Jeanette Jezick, OD '93 is celebrating two great events: 10 years of owning her own practice in Gales Ferry, CT and marrying Peter Wilbanks last August.

Jillian Ann (Bradley) Lombardi, OD '94 of Old Saybrook, CT is a member of the American Optometric Association and the Connecticut Association of Optometrists. She has three children.

Donald Costello, OD '95 was named lead optometrist of the Marrero, LA's Ochsner Clinic's Lapalco Satellite Clinic. He got married last year and is a Hurricane Katrina survivor.

Michelle L. (Kent) Hall, OD '96, Glenmont, NY has been working in her current position at Wal-Mart Vision Center for three and a half years. She has four children.

Dorothy Hitchmoth, OD '96, New London, NH, is President of the New Hampshire Optometric Association and Treasurer of the American Optometric Association - PAC.

For more photos and alumni stories go

www.neco.edu/alumni

Brian Godines, OD '97 is in his fifth year of active duty service and promoted to Lieutenant Commander in the United States Navy. He has two children.

Helios Leung, OD '97 is currently practicing in Ann Arbor, MI.

Dennis Pardo, OD '97, MPH, is presently the Director of Professional Relations for Advanced Vision Research. In this position he lectures extensively to practicing doctors as well as optometry students throughout the world on the topic of dry eye and ocular surface disease.

Christophe Juliet, OD '99 is currently practicing in San Diego, CA.

Tom Lezaj, OD '99 has his own practice in Fayetteville, GA and has two children.

Hillary Pyke, OD '99, Hogansburg, NY opened her own store on the reservation. She has four children.

Michelle Rahimian, OD '99 married Ted Mogtader in 2000 and together they opened Lunette Optic in Boston's Financial District in 2002 and celebrated their office's fifth anniversary. Michelle and Ted have two children.

2000's

Gregory Stockbridge, OD '00 is currently practicing in Elizabeth City, NC.

David M. Cohen, OD '01 has been working for America's Best Contacts and Eyeglasses for five and a half years. He married an



Barbara Caffrey, OD '77, and her husband, Arthur Caspari, PhD, Stephen Byrnes, OD '77, and his wife, Joanne Byrnes

optometrist and they had a daughter last summer.

Philip Mattson, OD '01 was interviewed for an article on vision therapy in an issue of the *Newhouse News Service*.

Diane M. Wallach, OD '01 purchased a high-end optical boutique in Norfolk, VA where she is a solo practitioner and enjoying building her practice. She is a member of the Tidewater Optometric Society and the Virginia Optometric Association. She has two children.

Marsha Malooley, OD '02 completed a residency at the Illinois College of Optometry in Corneal Disease and Contact Lenses then joined a practice, Chicago Corneal Consultants,

and has been there for over three years.

Marsha received her fellowship in the American Academy of Optometry and looks forward to giving her first lecture at the 2007 convention. She recently got engaged and plans on getting married in 2008.

Kimberly B. Ninyo, OD '05 has joined the Eye Centers of Florida in Naples. She holds a Master of Science in microbiology and cell science from the University of Florida.

NEEI NEWS

New Board of Trustees Chair Elected

Charles F. Mullen, OD '69, the former president of the Illinois College of Optometry (ICO) who once served as an assistant to the president for clinical development at NECO, has been elected chair of the Board of Trustees of the New England Eye Institute.

The Institute provides optometric services for more than 50,000 individuals annually in community health centers, homeless shelters, elder care facilities, hospitals, and public schools.

Prior to retiring as president of ICO, Dr. Mullen had served as director of the Optometry Service, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and executive director of The Eye Institute at the Pennsylvania College of Optometry.

New Interim President

Jim Hooley, a former president and chief executive officer of the Neighborhood Health Plan, has been named interim president of the New England Eye Institute (NEEI), the nation's largest urban-based eye care community clinic network.

NEEI, the College's clinical system, provides eye care services for more than 50,000 patients annually at some 44 facilities in the region, including community health centers, homeless shelters, schools, and hospitals.

Hooley has an extensive background in the delivery of community-based health services and the development of statewide health policies and programs.

He served as the first Commissioner of Massachusetts' Department of Medical Security, spent 17 years establishing and managing the Dorchester House Multi-Service Center, and is a former Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the Boston Department of Health and Hospitals.

Hooley holds BA and MSW degrees from Boston College and has taught social work and community health and management courses at Tufts Medical School, Brandeis University, Boston University, Suffolk University, and Bridgewater State College.

faculty news

Nancy Carlson, OD '77, Professor of Optometry, and **Barbara McGinley**, Director of Student Services, won the Lester Janoff Award for Writing Excellence in Optometric Education for their article, "Instilling Ethics and Professionalism in Today's Optometry Students." The article was published in *Optometric Education*.

Aurora Denial, OD '84, Assistant Professor of Optometry, participated in the panel "Making the Grade in the 21st Century: The Millennial Generation Enter Optometry School" at the 2007 AAO conference in Tampa. The panel discussed the future of optometric education.

Barry Fisch, OD '71, formerly the Chief of the Optometry Section in the V.A. Boston Healthcare System, has been appointed as a

full time Professor of Optometry in the Department of Biomedical Sciences and Disease. Dr. Fisch has been associated with the school for over three decades. He has since served the school in various capacities including Chief of the Glaucoma and Ocular Disease Services, Supervisor of the Specialty Contact Lens Clinic, and Chairman of the Faculty Development Program. For the past 20 years he has been the instructor of record of the Advanced Ocular Disease course.

Jane Gwiazda, PhD, Professor of Vision Science, took part in a meeting in Singapore to plan the next phase of the Refractive Error Study in Children (RESC) which will concentrate on myopia progression and risk factor assessment. The meeting was sponsored by The World Health Organization (WHO) Prevention of Blindness and Deafness Unit. Dr. Gwiazda is a member of the technical oversight committee for RESC.

Barry S. Kran, OD, Associate Professor of Optometry, is the 2007 recipient of the Thomas Caulfield Award conferred by the Northeast Chapter of the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired. This award was given in recognition of Dr. Kran's longstanding professional commitment to providing assistance and care to individuals with vision loss, and in helping them to lead productive lives within their communities.

Bruce Moore, OD '75, Marcus Professor of Pediatric Studies, participated in an international conference on Vision for Children in the Developing World at the University of Oxford in England.

After 15 years of service, **Stuart Rist** retired as the lab instructor for the optics courses in the Vision Science Department. **Frank D'Agostino** has been named to replace him.

Celebrate a wonderful event or memorialize a loved one with the College's new Tribute Card.

Make a gift in honor or memory of a loved one or friend to the College and the recipient or his or her family will receive this beautiful card, acknowledging your generous donation.



Please send your contribution with tribute information and the name and address of the recipient to the Development Office, NECO, 424 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02115

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